


American Indians in the Sixteenth Century.

(Concluded)

DESCENDING to the Pacific coast line, an altogether different class of people—saving the intrusive Apache and Apache Navajo—possessed the deserts, the river depressions and the Colorado delta. With these the reader is already partially familiar, and they will now detain us.

The Indians of the United States and Canada, at the time of which we write, were separated by their mode of living into two national divisions. These were the sedentaries living in villages like the Hurons or forming a confederation like the Iroquois, who practiced a rude horticulture and stored Indian corn and beans for the winter months, and the hunters and fishers, rovers of the forest and the plain, like the Algonquin and Dacotah. The sedentary races raised Indian corn, pumpkins and tobacco. Corn, supplemented by fish and the flesh of wild animals, was their only food. They knew nothing of alcoholic drinks, bread, salt, pepper or vegetables.

A remarkable fact which seems to prove that the American savage was familiar with the disastrous effects of marriage between blood relations, or of inbreeding, was that no warrior ever took a wife from the members of his own clan. The men and women of the clan were nearly all, by consanguinity, related to one another. Immemorial tribal laws barred their marriage. The man or woman selected a partner from another clan, and the children of the marriage belonged to the clan of the mother. The children did not inherit from the father, all his property, even his weapons, descended by right to his brothers or the sons of his sisters. The children inherited from the mother. And the reasons for this was that there could be no doubt who was the mother of the child, but such was the loosen-